

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
Meeting Minutes
May 31, 2017

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) was held on May 31, 2017, at the National D-Day Memorial, 3 Overlord Cir., Bedford, VA.

Members Present

- Harold Barton, Air Force Association
- Rick Oertel, American Legion
- Richard Mansfield, AMVETS
- Robert Sempek, Association of the United States Army
- Kenneth Shelton, Sr., Fifth Baptist Church Veterans' Ministry
- Lauren Augustine, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Tim Whitmore, Korean War Veterans Association
- Robert Herbert, Legion of Valor
- John Clickener, Marine Corps League
- Frank Wickersham, Military Officers Association of America
- William Barrett, Military Order of the World Wars
- David Sitler, Reserve Officers Association
- Perry Taylor, Roanoke Valley Veterans Council
- Dan Boyer, Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Marie Juliano, Women Marines Association
- Jim Icenhour, Chairman, Board of Veterans Services
- Jim Boyd, Veterans Services Foundation, representing Rich Schollmann, Chairman
- Deputy Commissioner Steve Combs, representing Commissioner John L. Newby II, Department of Veterans Services

Members Absent

- Curtis Jennings, Disabled American Veterans
- William Ashton, Fleet Reserve Association
- Jim Cuthbertson, Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Dan Dennison, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Glenn Rodriguez, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- Jon Ostrowski, Non Commissioned Officers Association
- Raymond Kenney, Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Charles Montgomery, Vietnam Veterans of America
- Robert Huffman, Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association
- Adam Provost, Virginia National Guard Association

Alternates Present (representing their VSO)

- Chip Moran, National Association for Uniformed Services
- Frank Driscoll, Navy Seabee Veterans of America
- Mike Anliker, Virginia National Guard Association

Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)

- Don Kaiserman, Military Officers Association of America

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

- Carrie Ann Alford, DVS
- Betty Ann Liddell, DVS
- Jeb Hockman, DVS

Others Present

- Maggie Wickersham
- Karen Jeffries, Navy Mutual Aid Association
- April Cheek-Messier, Executive Director, National D-Day Memorial

Items included in the Agenda Packet

Agenda

March 8, 2017 meeting minutes (Agenda Item IV)

Reports (Agenda Item VI)

- Board of Veterans Services
- Veterans Services Foundation

Summary proposed changes to JLC Constitution and JLC Bylaws (Agenda Item VIIIa)

Summary Matrix of Proposed 2018 JLC Initiatives (Agenda Item VIIIc)

Proposed Initiatives (Agenda Item VIIIc)

The meeting agenda is included as *Attachment 1*.

Opening, Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation & Thoughts

Chairman Harold “Bart” Barton called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chaplain L. T. “Tim” Whitmore delivered an opening prayer.

Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, Approval of the Agenda, and Introduction of Guests

The roll was called, and 16 of the 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented. A quorum was determined. Two representatives came in after roll call, for a total of 18 of 25 Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) were recorded as being represented.

Mr. Jim Icenhour, the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS); Mr. Jim Boyd, representing the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF); and DVS Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs, representing Commissioner John L. Newby II were recorded as present.

Chairman Barton asked Ms. Alford to introduce guests. The names and organizations of the guests are recorded above. Chairman Barton welcomed them to the meeting. He then welcomed Mrs. April Cheek-Messier, the Executive Director of the National D-Day Memorial and thanked

her for hosting the JLC. She welcomed the JLC to Bedford and the Memorial, and mentioned that they had a wonderful ceremony on Memorial Day and were currently busy getting ready for the D-Day ceremony on June 6th. She said she would return at the end of the meeting and had arranged a personal tour of the memorial for all JLC members who wished to stay and participate.

Mr. Dan Boyer made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. Bob Sempek, to approve the agenda of the May 31, 2017 meeting. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Approve March 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Tim Whitmore made a **motion, seconded** by Mr. John Clickener, to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2017 meeting. The motion carried **unanimously**.

Reports

Board of Veterans Services

Board of Veterans Services (BVS) Chairman Jim Icenhour gave the BVS report. (*Attachment 2*)

Veterans Services Foundation

Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Chairman Richard Schollmann was unable to attend, VSF Member Jim Boyd gave the VSF report. (*Attachment 3*)

Virginia Military Advisory Council

Mr. Bill Barrett stated that the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC) had met once since the last JLC meeting. He attended and reported that there was an excellent presentation by Mr. John Simms with the Roosevelt Group on a cost-benefit analysis of exempting military retiree pay from income tax in Virginia as in other states. The data was not good for the state budget and the report determined it was not something that Virginia should pursue.

Deputy Commissioner Combs said that as soon as the VMAC releases the report and their minutes, he would make sure they were distributed to the JLC members.

State Board of Elections

Mr. Frank Wickersham updated the JLC that the State Board of Elections does not oppose the idea or having a pilot program but needs a code change and is still looking for a pilot program first. They estimate it will cost about \$400,000. Mr. Wickersham has also been in discussions with former SBE Administrator Don Palmer about the idea.

Virginia War Memorial Board

Ms. Marie Juliano informed the JLC members that was nothing new to report.

Hampton Drug Court Veterans Docket

Mr. Rich Mansfield informed the JLC members that was nothing new to report.

Fairfax Veterans Treatment Docket

Ms. Lauren Augustine informed the JLC members that the next dockets will be June 9 and 23 and encouraged those who could to attend one. She said they are researching some policy initiatives related to substance abuse recovery programs but they are still working on it and have nothing to offer the JLC at this time.

Deputy Commissioner Combs said that he attended the recent graduation and it was a powerful ceremony that showed clearly the “stick” and the “carrot” as, in addition to those veterans who graduated that day with their mentors by their side and the judge giving praise, one veteran had not lived up to the deal and was led away to jail in handcuffs.

Mr. Steve Herbert asked about the similarities between Hampton and Fairfax veteran treatment docket programs. Chairman Barton explained that Hampton has always been through their drug court and Fairfax is not.

Ms. Alford added that they are very similar, as both adhere strictly to the NADCP guidelines for veteran dockets and both had judges participate in the Supreme Court of Virginia’s committee to write the standards and guidelines for Virginia courts who set up veterans dockets. She added that Mr. Barton is correct – Hampton’s program is through their drug court and Fairfax is through their General District Court.

Mr. Chip Moran mentioned that he is working with Delegate Stolle and Senator Dunnivant on a veterans docket starting in Virginia Beach.

Veterans Care Centers

Mr. Chip Moran gave an update in the absence of Mr. Dan Dennison. Mr. Moran had attended the public forum for the new Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center back in March and it was a good meeting with two main concerns: storm water run-off and traffic, both of which are being addressed.

Deputy Commissioner Combs said the public forum for the Puller VCC held last week in Manassas went very well and said he would give more details about the new care centers in his presentation.

Report from DVS Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs

Deputy Commissioner began by explaining that Commissioner Newby was in Richmond leading a meeting with Tech For Troops and their new initiative in Virginia and was unable to be with them in Bedford.

He mentioned several upcoming events with DVS for JLC members to add to their calendars:

- June 2: Smithfield Foods to present check to Governor McAuliffe to support DVS homeless veterans programs (11:45 a.m., Virginia War Memorial)
- June 7: Military/veterans bill signing ceremony and naming of the Hampton Roads Veterans Care Center (1:30 p.m., Virginia War Memorial)
- June 14: Flag Day Celebration (11:30 a.m., Virginia War Memorial)

- June 16: Groundbreaking ceremony for the VWM Expansion project (4 p.m., Virginia War Memorial)
- June 22-23: Virginia Women Veterans Summit (Chesapeake) – event is “Sold Out” – waitlist established in case there are cancellations. JLC Members are welcome to attend the networking reception the night of June 22.

He mentioned the Benefits Services staff had a week of training the first week of May out in Lexington, Virginia and it went very well. Also, in addition to the office opening in Manassas they will be opening three more offices this summer and fall: Loudoun (new office), Abingdon (relocated from Bristol) and Williamsburg (new office).

He gave an update on VETE and the good work the team has been doing with V3, VTAP, SkillBridge and managing the GI Bill program. The MMAC team won the Governor’s Public Service award for Teamwork and he showed a picture of the team at a ceremony at the Governor’s mansion.

He gave an update on the new and on-going expansion projects at the Suffolk Cemetery, the Virginia War Memorial and with the two new care centers. He mentioned that due to a change in federal regulations, DVS was able to reconfigure the two new care centers with 8 additional beds each, bringing them both up to 128-bed facilities, still all single occupancy rooms. He showed the JLC several renderings of the new care centers, which will be identical.

The powerpoint presentation, including the renderings of the new care centers, was distributed to the members after the meeting via email and is available from DVS upon request.

Report from DVS Virginia Veterans & Family Support Director Betty Ann Liddell

VVFS Director Betty Ann Liddell began her powerpoint presentation to the JLC on her personal history as a military spouse and now mother of two Marines. She also quickly covered the history of the Wounded Warrior Program/VVFS, with the name change occurring in 2015.

She gave an update on the changes taking place due to the 2016 Working Group, chaired by Secretary Harvey, and HB2206, patroned by Delegate Cox, which reorganized VVFS and changed its mission and scope of practice: ***“Conduct outreach to veterans and families; cost-effectively refer them to mental health, physical rehabilitative, and other services as needed; and periodically monitor their progress.”***

This new goal addresses key issues identified in the JLARC report, sets clear expectations for VVFS staff, avoids duplication and clarifies that VVFS does not provide direct clinical case management.

VVFS has created a new mission statement: ***VVFS provides resource connections, care coordination, behavioral health and rehabilitative support and services to Virginia’s Veterans, National Guard, Armed Forces Reserves, caregivers and families.*** Which more succinctly represents what they do for Virginia veterans and families. VVFS is now comprised of:

- Director
- Regional Directors

- Resource Specialists
- Veteran Peer Support staff
- Homeless and Housing Director – Homeless Pilot Project partnership
- Criminal Justice Coordinator
- Operation Family Caregiver program
- Mission Healthy Relationship (MHR) and Mission Healthy Family (MHF) workshops
- AmeriCorps Navigators

VVFS staff will now be co-located with Benefits staff around the state, where possible. Conversion of staff to state employees will be complete by July 1.

Ms. Augustine asked about the AmeriCorps navigators and if VVFS will be continuing with the program. Ms. Liddell stated that due to the uncertainty with Congress and the current lack of funding for AmeriCorps they have not reapplied, but they will reapply when possible. VVFS is also looking to shift the focus of the AmeriCorps navigators to work with the Criminal Justice Coordinator.

Ms. Jeffries and Mr. Mansfield asked about donations to VVFS and other DVS service lines. Deputy Commissioner Combs explained that the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) has the ability to collect donations on behalf of DVS. Anyone who donates can earmark a donation for a specific service line or program and that will be entered in the recordkeeping by VSF. Mr. Frank Driscoll, who also serves on the VSF and keeps track of donations, confirmed that he tracks all donations earmarked to a specific program and ensures the money is not used for anything else.

Deputy Commissioner Combs also thanked the JLC for their continual attention to the DVS service lines and mentioned that Matt Leslie, Director of Housing and Homelessness programs will receive the Homeward award for his excellent work in creating the continua of care resource network in communities to care for veterans who are homeless or at risk.

The powerpoint presentation was distributed to the members after the meeting via email and is available from DVS upon request.

New Business

Vote on the April Motions for Amending the Constitution and the Bylaws

Mr. Rich Mansfield reminded the Council that they were presented with the proposed amendments at the March 8 meeting, and had received written notice 30 days in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Alford pointed their attention to the report from the Committee in their agenda packet with the explanation of the voting rules and amendment language. She reminded the JLC that, per their Constitution, each of the two amendments would be reviewed and then a roll call would be needed for each VSO to vote in favor or opposition.

The first amendment was to the JLC Constitution – adding the mission statement to Article I as paragraph 4.

The second amendment was to the JLC By-Laws, Article III, paragraph 1. Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee – changing from every other year to every year the review process.

Chairman Barton asked for discussion. There was none. Mr. Barton made a motion to pass the amendment, seconded by Mr. Rick Oertel.

The roll was called and the amendments passed 18-0.

Report of the Nomination Committee and Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mr. Boyer reported that the Chairman, Mr. Bart Barton, and Vice Chairman, Ms. Marie Juliano, were unable to continue in their current offices. Ms. Juliano qualifies for nomination to the role of Chair. Mr. Boyer stated that he needed nominations for both Chairman and Vice Chairman as soon as possible and the vote would be taken at the September 6 meeting.

Review and discussion of potential 2018 JLC Initiatives

Mr. Dave Sitler, Legislative Officer, led the discussion on the initiatives proposed for 2018. A summary matrix and position papers of six proposed initiatives – 2 new initiatives and 4 that have been previously supported by the JLC – was included in the agenda packet for review and reference (*Attachment 4*).

Ms. Alford gave a brief update on the matrix. Three proposals from 2017 were pulled. 2017-01 was passed and signed in to law. 2017-02 for additional funds for the War Memorial is not necessary as DVS will request the funds as part of the new biennial budget request. 2017-05 for a veteran entrepreneurship grant pilot program was pulled because DVS and BVS are working on the issue and still formulating what the policy initiative(s) will be. DVS will present their requests to the JLC for support at the September 6 meeting after completing their work as an agency and presenting it to the Secretary.

Two new initiatives are offered – one is for the 2nd resolution of the constitutional amendment regarding tax exemptions for 100% Disabled Veterans and their surviving spouses. Ms. Alford reminded the JLC that they have a history of supporting the 2nd resolution amending the constitution for this tax exemption and suggested they support it in 2018. The Marine Corps League offered to sponsor this proposal. It was given the temporary number of 2018-01.

The second initiative is a bill that Delegate Jason Miyares has been working on for tax exemption on military retiree pay for certain low-income veterans. the American Legion has already agreed to sponsor it. It was given the temporary number of 2018-02.

Ms. Alford strongly suggested the sponsors of the remaining initiatives work with legislators and each other to tweak the proposals and find a way to get legislation through the General Assembly instead of repeatedly submitting the same proposals unchanged.

Returning policy initiatives:

Proposed initiative – “Guard Income Tax Subtraction” – The two Guard associations will be working on this initiative together. It was given the temporary number of 2018-03.

Proposed initiative – “In-state tuition for all members of the Reserve Components” – Ms. Christina Barrille from the National Guard is currently on maternity leave, but the VANG representative stated he would talk to her about the path forward. Ms. Alford suggested it stay on the list until September. It was given the temporary number of 2018-04.

Proposed initiative – “VMSDEP eligibility” – Mr. Bill Ashton was unable to attend the meeting but has stated that he wishes to continue pursuing this issue. He is working with Delegate Torian. It was given the temporary number of 2018-05.

Proposed initiative – “Electronic Ballot Return” – Mr. Wickersham and MOAA are working with SBE to address security concerns, as well as create a pilot program to see if the program would work. It was given the temporary number of 2018-06.

Other New Business and open discussion

Chairman Barton asked if there was any other new business. None stated.

Public Comment

Chairman Barton asked if there was any public comments. None stated.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Barton reminded the members that the next meeting will be held September 6th at the American Legion building. Mrs. Cheek-Messier asked for a show of hands for interest in a tour of the memorial after lunch and introduced John Long, the Education Director, who would be conducting the tour.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
National D-Day Memorial
3 Overlord Cir, Bedford, VA 24523
May 31, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

AGENDA

- I. Opening and Pledge of Allegiance – *Bart Barton, JLC Chairman* (10:00 – 10:05)
 - II. Chaplain's Corner, *Tim Whitmore, Chaplain* (10:05-10:10)
 - III. Roll call of VSOs, quorum determination, approval of agenda and introduction of guests – *Bart Barton, Chairman* (10:10 – 10:15)
 - IV. Approve March 8 meeting minutes – *Bart Barton, Chairman* (10:15 – 10:20)
 - V. Reports (10:20 – 10:40)
 - a. Board of Veterans Services – *Jim Icenhour, BVS Chairman*
 - b. Veterans Services Foundation – *Rich Schollmann, VSF Chairman*
 - c. VMAC, *Bill Barrett*
 - d. State Board of Elections, *Frank Wickersham*
 - e. Virginia War Memorial Board, *Marie Juliano*
 - f. Hampton Drug Court Veterans Tract Advisory Council, *Rich Mansfield*
 - g. Fairfax Veteran Treatment Docket, *Dan Dennison*
 - VI. Report from DVS Commissioner, *Deputy Commissioner Steven Combs* (10:40-11:00)
 - BREAK (10 Minutes)
 - VII. Virginia Veterans & Family Support (VVFS), *Betty Ann Liddell, Director* (11:10 – 11:30)
 - VIII. New business (11:30 – 12:30)
 - a. Vote on the March Report of the Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee (annual review), *Rich Mansfield*
 - b. Members confirm intention to run for Chair and Vice Chair (election at 7 Sep meeting) *Dan Boyer*
 - c. Review and discussion of potential 2018 JLC Initiatives and appoint JLC sponsors for each proposed initiative, *Dave Sitler*
 - d. Other new business and open discussion, *Bart Barton*
 - IX. Public comment period (12:30 – 12:35)
 - X. Closing remarks and prepare for next meeting – *Bart Barton, JLC Chairman* (12:35 – 12:45)
 - XI. Adjourn (12:45)
- Lunch & Tour of the Memorial to follow the meeting

ATTACHMENT 2
**REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICES
ORGANIZATIONS (JLC)**
May 31, 2017

The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) met on March 16, 2017, but has not met since the last JLC meeting in March.

The Board of Veterans Services is currently working with DVS on their strategic plan for the upcoming biennium.

Our Veteran Entrepreneurship working group is busy hosting forums around the Commonwealth to hear from the local communities on what they believe is needed to support veteran entrepreneurs in Virginia. We held one in April at George Mason University and one in May at William & Mary. Invited to attend are: veteran entrepreneurs, university faculty & staff / student veterans, local incubators & accelerators, SBDC / VBOC / Chamber members / EDA / legislators.

The remaining forums are:

May 31 – Old Dominion University, 9-11:30am, Webb Center, 1551 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk

June 5 – University of Virginia, 9-11:30am, Place TBD

June 6 – Virginia Tech, 9-11:30am, Place TBD

The BVS is made up of fourteen citizen members, five legislators, and three *ex officio* members. Board members are in regular contact with the Department of Veterans Services to provide policy input on key operational issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Icenhour
Chairman

ATTACHMENT 3

VETERANS SERVICES FOUNDATION REPORT TO THE JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNSEL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS May 31, 2017

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Board of Trustees has held two meetings since the last JLC meeting on March 8, 2017. The VSF Board of Trustees met on March 22, 2017 and May 11, 2017, both meetings were held at the American Legion Department Headquarters. Commissioner Newby provided a presentation detailing the Projected DVS FY18 Requirements and the potential needs of the individual agency programs (7 total) supported by the Foundation. Most programs showed increased spending requests for the upcoming fiscal year starting on July 1, 2017. Due to some substantial increases, the members agreed that further discussion was needed and it was recommended that the finance and development committee schedule a meeting to review the requests and then make their recommendations to the full Board for consideration.

During the 2017 Session of the General Assembly, a bill was passed and signed into law that will directly affect VSF as of July 1, 2017. The Foundation will then become a separate state agency with the Board of Trustees hiring the Executive Director. Other notable changes:

- The annual report will now be sent directly to the General Assembly

- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security will be a member of the Board

- VSF will have authority to request appropriations

- DVS will provide staff support to VSF

Both organizations believe that the new law will not affect the ability to work together for the common goals and are committed to making this work.

As of March 31, 2017, the Foundation has received donations totaling \$551,370.00, of which almost \$308,000 was designated for VVFS and \$185,000 for V3. Expenditures totaled \$459,618.05, an increase of a little over 50% from this time last year. The largest increase in spending was in VVFS for direct services and the pilot Homeless Veterans Fund.

Smithfield Foods will be donating \$68,000 to VVFS for the Pilot Homeless Veteran Fund. The check presentation with the Governor is scheduled for June 2, 2017 at the Virginia War Memorial starting at 11:45 am. All board members should have received an email invitation.

The Board elected the following officers for FY18:

Chair: Rich Schollmann

1st Vice Chair: Al Pianalto

2nd Vice Chair: Jack Lanier

The next VSF Board meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2017 at the American Legion Department Headquarters.

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Schollmann
Veterans Services Foundation Chairman

ATTACHMENT 4
Summary of Proposed 2018 Initiatives

May 31, 2017

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
JLC 2018-01 <i>Constitutional Amendment, Residency Requirement for Surviving Spouses of 100% Disabled Veterans</i>	That the 2018 General Assembly pass resolutions identical to the one passed by the 2017 General Assembly (HJ562), thereby continuing the process to amend Virginia's Constitution to provide parity for surviving spouses of 100% disabled veterans and those Killed in Action.
JLC 2018-02 <i>Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income 100% Disabled Veterans</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federally adjusted gross income, not exceeding 250% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.
JLC 2018-03 <i>Guard Income Tax Subtraction</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly increase the state income tax subtraction level for members of the Virginia National Guard from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year.
JLC 2018-04 <i>In-state tuition for all members of the Reserve Components</i>	That the Governor and the General Assembly change the eligibility for in-state tuition to include all members of the Virginia National Guard and the Reserve components, thus recognizing their service to the Commonwealth and treating them equally to the active components and veterans.
JLC 2018-05 <i>VMSDEP</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly remove the requirement that a veteran's disability rating be combat related. Instead, a permanent service-connected disability rating of at least 90%, plus satisfaction of the other requirements currently in the Code, would qualify a veteran's spouse or child for VMSDEP benefits.
JLC 2018-06 <i>Electronic Ballot Return</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation and provide budget support of a pilot program for the electronic return of absentee ballots by Virginia's deployed military service members to enfranchise their voting privileges.